



**FIFA<sup>®</sup>**

**Regulations on the  
Organisation of Refereeing  
in FIFA Member Associations**

Fédération Internationale de Football Association

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# REGULATIONS

on the Organisation of Refereeing in FIFA Member Associations

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### 3 Definitions

For the purpose of these regulations, the terms set out below are defined as follows:

**1.**

Executive committee: the strategic and oversight body of a member association.

**2.**

Fitness test: a way of testing the physical ability of match officials. Individuals of each category must pass a specific fitness test to be eligible for match appointments.

**3.**

International list: the FIFA Refereeing International Lists which are published every year. Each list is valid from 1 January to 31 December of the given year and includes all match officials authorised to officiate international matches for each category of football, futsal and beach soccer.

**4.**

Match analysts: refereeing coaches who analyse matches to find critical incidents which define the performance of match officials.

**5.**

Match commissioners: officials who are appointed by FIFA to supervise the correct organisation of matches and for ensuring that FIFA regulations and instructions are observed.

**6.**

Match officials: referees, video match officials, assistant referees, futsal referees, beach soccer referees and any other individual appointed to officiate or assist in officiating a match.

**7.**

Member associations: associations that have been admitted into membership of FIFA by the FIFA Congress.

**8.**

Mental preparation experts: subject matter experts who provide match officials with the support necessary to retain or improve the mental acumen required to succeed in their refereeing careers.

**9.**

Mentors: refereeing coaches who counsel match officials with regard to their performance, preparation and any relevant career advice.

**10.**

Referee assessors: refereeing coaches who evaluate and assess the performance of match officials by offering them advice and constructive comments to help them to improve and progress. These evaluations are part of the criteria used for promoting or demoting match officials before each season.

**11.**

Referees committee: an autonomous group of former match officials responsible for organising all refereeing matters within the organisation that appointed them.

**12.**

Referee instructors: refereeing coaches who instruct match officials in technical refereeing skills either on the field of play or in the classroom. Any reference to referee instructors in these regulations also applies to fitness instructors.

**13.**

Tactical preparation experts: subject matter experts who show match officials what to expect on the field of play in terms of team tactics, player's technical characteristics, etc. These are current or former team coaches with excellent knowledge and experience in modern football tactics.

## 4 Definitions

NB: Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa. Additionally, definitions of words and terms listed in the Laws of the Game issued by The IFAB are also applicable for the purpose in these regulations.

## 5 I. Introductory provisions

### **1** Introduction

These regulations describe the organisation of refereeing within member associations and are intended to assist member associations and match officials with their respective duties and responsibilities. FIFA reserves the right to monitor the implementation procedure defined in these regulations.

### **2** Scope of application

These regulations apply to all member associations. Member associations have exclusive competence, not granted to any other bodies such as the leagues, unions, or government, to develop and implement these regulations at national level.

### **3** General provisions

**1.**

Each member association is obliged to establish a referees committee which is directly subordinate to the member association based on art. 14 par. 1 g) of the FIFA Statutes.

**2.**

The referees committee must be an integral part of the member association's structure. It shall be responsible for the organisation, regulation and development of refereeing. It must be under the exclusive control of the member association and shall under no circumstances fall under the supervision or control of other bodies, such as leagues or governments (including parliaments and any other state authorities).

### **4** Composition of the referees committee

**1.**

The referees committee shall be composed only of former match officials (preferably having operated at the top level of their respective domestic competition) with a chairman, a deputy chairman and an adequate number of other members. They shall not be affiliated to any clubs, leagues, any other football organisation or another referee organisation (union, membership group, etc.). Active match officials shall not be eligible to become members of any referees committee.

**2.**

The chairman of the referees committee may be a member of the executive committee (provided the regulations of the relevant member associations allow it) but must be a former top-level match official.

**3.**

The deputy chairman and the other members of the referees committee shall be appointed by the president of the member association on the proposal of the chairman of the referees committee.



## 5 Duties of the referees committee

### 1.

The duties of the referees committee shall be defined by the executive committee of a member association and shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- a) Classify match officials in each category based on evaluations of their performance as well as determine promotions or demotions;
- b) Approve (can include manage) the appointment of match officials for competitions organised under the jurisdiction of a member association;
- c) Oversee the nomination of candidates for the FIFA Refereeing International Lists according to the FIFA Regulations Governing the Registration of International Match Officials;
- d) Supervise the enforcement of the Laws of the Game in all the competitions organised under the jurisdiction of a member association;
- e) Comply with standard refereeing methodology as established by FIFA to ensure uniform implementation of the Laws of the Game;
- f) Utilise uniform criteria for evaluating referees as established by FIFA;
- g) Select and approve national refereeing coaches (includes instructors assessors, match analysts and any other individuals who directly impact the performance and development of match officials);
- h) Approve administrative regulations governing refereeing.

## 6 General provisions

### 1.

Each member association must set up a dedicated refereeing department headed by an expert with broad experience in the field of refereeing.

### 2.

The refereeing department must be set up within the general secretariat of the member association.

## 7 Composition of the refereeing department

### 1.

The refereeing department shall include at least one expert with broad experience in the field of refereeing, working on a full-time basis and responsible for the administration and development of refereeing.

### 2.

Additional staff may also be necessary to cover administration and development, depending on the member association's needs.

## 8 Duties of the refereeing department

The primary duties of a refereeing department include:

- a) Assist the referees committee in whatever capacity as necessary;
- b) Implement decisions adopted by the referees committee;
- c) Manage the appointment of match officials for matches in competitions organised under the jurisdiction of a member association;
- d) Carry out all tasks related to the organisation and logistics of refereeing;
- e) Autonomously carry out all administrative duties of the refereeing department, including budget management;
- f) Implement programmes to develop match officials according to the guidelines approved by the referees committee;
- g) Organise courses for match officials and refereeing coaches;
- h) Prepare and produce teaching materials in line with refereeing principles established by FIFA, as well as the Laws of the Game for each category of match officials;
- i) Prepare strategic short and long-term referee development plans (including budgets);
- j) Regularly report on its activities to the referees committee.

## **9** Financial matters and resources

### **1.**

The refereeing department shall propose an annual budget to the referees committee for approval, which shall then submit it to the relevant body of the member association for final authorisation. This budget must be expended by the refereeing department exactly as approved, unless a change has been expressly authorised by the relevant body of the member association. At a minimum, it must contain explicit provisions for grassroots, FIFA (all categories) and women's refereeing programmes.

### **2.**

Service fees, including daily allowances and travel expenses, must be established for each category and paid directly to each match official for every match.

## 10 General provisions

All match officials registered with a member association must meet the following minimum requirements:

- a) Pass the applicable FIFA fitness test as specified in the FIFA Regulations on the Registration of International Match Officials (published annually on FIFA.com);
- b) Pass an annual medical examination that affirms their ability to perform the physical activities required to officiate matches as assigned; any change in status that could affect their ability to perform required training match appointments must immediately be communicated to the refereeing department;
- c) Pass a test to evaluate their technical knowledge of the most current Laws of the Game relevant to each category of match officials;
- d) Video match officials (VMOs) and referees working with the assistance of VMO(s) are subject to additional requirements outlined in the Implementation Assistance and Approval Programme (IAAP) (published at FIFA.com).

## 11 Match official categories

1. Match official categories shall be established by each member association's referees committee and shall correspond to the categories or leagues organised under its jurisdiction.
2. The number of match officials per category shall be determined by each referees committee as needed. FIFA International match officials shall always be part of the first category.

## 12 Appointment of match officials

1. The appointment of match officials is a fundamental part of refereeing development and must be managed in cooperation with the referees committee and the refereeing department of the relevant member association. No club, league or other body of the member association may interfere in the match official appointment process.
2. Match officials shall be appointed according to their level of skill and experience, and fulfil all requirements in art. 10 of these regulations prior to officiating each match.
3. Match officials must receive sufficient notice prior to each appointment to allow enough time for preparation, although exceptions are permitted in rare and clearly justified circumstances.

## **13** Promotion and demotion of match officials

**1.**

The criteria for the promotion and demotion of match officials must be set by the referees committee.

**2.**

The referees committee assisted by the refereeing department, shall rank all match officials in categories and subcategories based on evaluations and analysis compiled by assessors and the refereeing department.

**3.**

The referees committee shall decide how many match officials will be demoted to a lower category or subcategory and how many will be promoted to an upper category or subcategory.

## **14** Evaluation of match official performance

The referees committee shall establish a referee assessor panel to analyse the performance of match officials at matches in their category. In order to facilitate this process in a consistent manner, the referees committee shall establish an assessment report template to evaluate match officials. Assessment reports should be shared with each match official once approved by the referees committee. All records are the property of the member association and should be kept on file long term by the refereeing department for further reference.

## 15 Sponsor advertising

**1.**

During matches organised under the jurisdiction of a member association, sponsor advertising may be authorised for the shirts worn by match officials. All advertising for tobacco-related products, alcoholic beverages, narcotics (ex. marijuana) or gambling establishments (casinos or betting companies) is strictly prohibited. Any slogans of a political, racist or religious nature are also forbidden.

**2.**

Advertising for match officials shall not be permitted if it creates a conflict of interest with the advertising worn by either of the two participating teams through a shared sponsor. In the event of such a conflict, match officials shall not wear advertising from the sponsor in question and any related advertising shall also be removed from the referee review area (RRA) and/or the video operations room (VOR) prior to the match.

**3.**

Advertising is not permitted on the front of the shirt. This is reserved for official badges, the emblem of the member association and a small logo of the apparel manufacturer (if applicable). Advertising, with the exception of standard kit manufacturer logos, is also not permitted on the shorts, socks or shoes. Advertising shall not exceed 315 square cm on the back and 150 square cm on each sleeve. The moisture wicking properties of the shirts should not be compromised in order to preserve the comfort necessary for athletic performance of the match officials (advertisements should be printed, rather than bonded if possible).

**4.**

During matches utilising VAR, advertising is also permitted inside the VOR and on the monitor stand in the RRA. This must follow the requirements listed in par. 1 above.

**5.**

Revenues from sponsor advertising contracts must be reinvested in refereeing matters.

## 16 General provisions

Member associations shall create and implement a clear strategy for referee development. This strategy shall include three parts:

- a) Match official recruitment and retention (as described in art. 17 of these regulations);
- b) Match official training and education (as described in art. 19-21 of these regulations);
- c) Short- and long-term budgetary plan.

## 17 Recruitment and retention of match official

### 1.

Member associations shall organise campaigns in cooperation with their refereeing departments, in order to increase the number and quality of active match officials.

### 2.

Member associations, through regional referees committees, are encouraged to recruit new match officials at local clubs, universities and colleges. Students and players are often suitable candidates for officiating.

### 3.

Member associations shall put programmes in place to retain active match officials and minimise their turn-over.

## 18 Refereeing development objectives

Member associations shall set the following objectives for refereeing development:

- a) Develop and improve the performance of registered match officials in all matches under the jurisdiction of member associations at all levels;
- b) Ensure uniform interpretation and application of the Laws of the Game;
- c) Offer support and programmes adapted to the needs of each match official and each category;
- d) Increase their number of match officials;
- e) Develop the referee instructor and referee assessor panels.

## 19 Activities for the education of match officials, instructors, and assessors

Member associations shall organise the following activities (programmes, courses, meetings, seminars or different activities) for both women and men:

- a) Annual refresher courses and regular seminars for match officials in the top categories;
- b) Courses and activities for match officials in other categories;
- c) Programmes for talented and promising match officials;
- d) Programmes for grassroots match officials;
- e) Programmes for women match officials;
- f) Programmes for futsal referees;
- g) Programmes for beach soccer referees;
- h) Fitness programmes for all classifications of match officials;
- i) Programmes for referee instructors;
- j) Programmes for referee assessors.

## 20 Education and training of elite match officials

### 1.

Match officials who officiate at the highest level in the member association should have the support of a team of experts composed of at least one referee instructor, fitness instructor, mental preparation expert, football coach, match analyst and medical doctor.

### 2.

Special training programmes should include regular meetings for training sessions and analysis of match situations. A preparatory course should also be organised at least once a year. Current FIFA and confederation programmes may be used for elite courses and meetings at the member association. Match official education is essential both on the field of play (practical) and in the classroom (theoretical). Additional training requirements for match officials involved in matches using VAR are outlined in the IAAP process (published on FIFA.com).

## 21 Talented match officials

### 1.

Talented match officials must be identified and supported by a more comprehensive development structure including specifically assigned refereeing coaches.

### 2.

The following criteria may be used to identify talented match officials:

- a) Experience
- b) Physical condition
- c) Technical skill
- d) Football understanding
- e) Psychological preparation
- f) Future potential



## 22 Refereeing coaches

The referees committee shall appoint experts in the following categories to support the education and development of match officials:

- a) Referee instructors / match analysts;
- b) Referee assessors (also known as observers);
- c) Fitness instructors;
- d) Mental preparation experts;
- e) Nutritional experts;
- f) Tactical preparation experts (football team coaches).

## 23 Teaching materials

### 1.

FIFA and its confederations shall periodically provide member associations with teaching materials to support referee education programmes. It is mandatory for the member associations to follow the guidelines drawn up by FIFA for the use of these materials in order to ensure uniform interpretation and application of the Laws of the Game.

### 2.

These teaching materials (videos, documents, multimedia, etc.) shall address:

- a) The Laws of the Game and their interpretation;
- b) Guidelines for match officials;
- c) Analysis of match situations.

### 3.

The teaching materials mentioned in par. 2 above and other relevant refereeing information shall be available on FIFA.com.

### 4.

Member associations may also produce their own teaching materials provided that they are in line with FIFA's guidelines and the Laws of the Game.

## **24** Matters not provided for

Any matters not provided for in these regulations and cases of force majeure shall be decided by the FIFA Council whose decisions are final.

## **25** Official languages

In the case of any discrepancy in the interpretation of the English, French, Spanish or German texts of these regulations, the English text shall be authoritative.

## **26** Enforcement

These regulations were approved by the FIFA Council on 17 September 2020 and come into force immediately.

Zurich, 17 September 2020

For the FIFA Council

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Fatma Samoura

Fédération Internationale de Football Association